

Planning Commission Date: March 24, 2004

Item No. **10**

MILPITAS PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

Category: New Business

Report prepared by: Staci Pereira

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TITLE: "S" ZONE APPROVAL AMENDMENT NO. SA2004-18

Proposal: A request for a sign program for a single tenant building recently subdivided to accommodate three restaurants, zoned General Commercial.

Location: 273-279 W. Calaveras Blvd. (APN 22-25-042)

RECOMMENDATION: Approval with conditions

Applicant: Lisa Lo, P.O. Box 5161, Redwood City, CA 94063

Property Owner: Lisa Lo, P.O. Box 5161, Redwood City, CA 94063

Previous Action(s): "S" Zone approval and amendments, use permits

Environmental Info: Exempt

General Plan Designation: General Commercial

Present Zoning: General Commercial

Existing Land Use: Shopping center

Agenda Sent To: Applicant/Owner

Attachments: Plans

PJ No. N/A

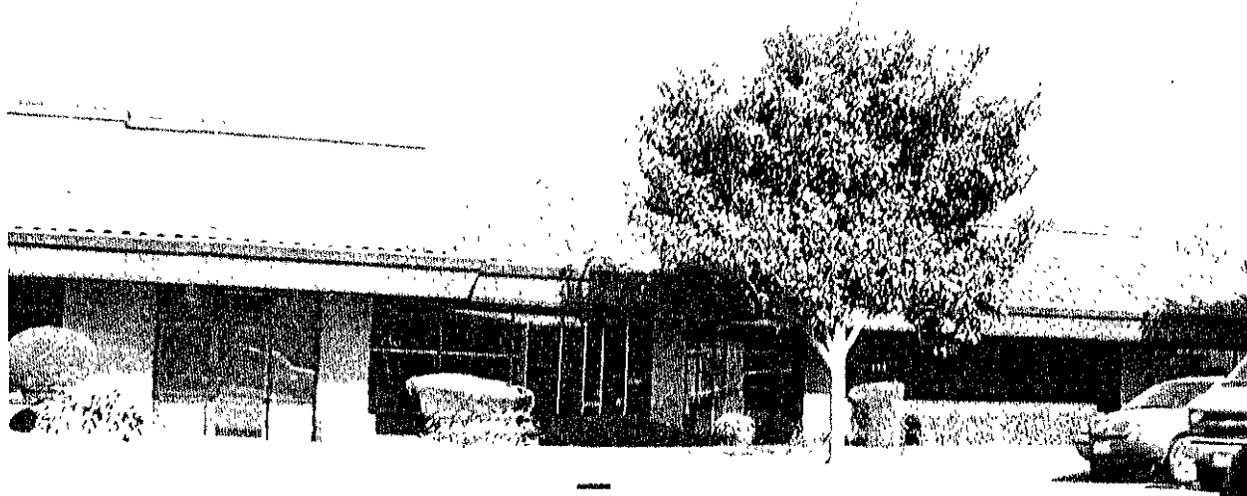
BACKGROUND

On May 3, 1979, the Planning Commission approved an "S" Zone Approval for a 6,873 square feet professional office building. Subsequent amendments include a landscaping plan on August 6, 1979, building signage on September 2, 1982, closure of the driveway onto Calaveras Blvd.

west of the building on June 19, 1984, addition of an ATM with signage on December 19, 1985 and another ATM on July 25, 1990. More recently, the Planning Commission approved 3 use permits for new restaurants (UP2003-24, UP2003-29 and UP2003-43) that will occupy the former bank building. These approvals included site improvements such as the addition of a trash enclosure, new exterior entrance doors and parking reductions.

Site Description

The 0.68-acre site contains approximately 6,873 square feet building that fronts W. Calaveras Blvd. and located adjacent to Calaveras Plaza shopping center. The site is located north of W. Calaveras Blvd. and west of Butler Street. To the north and west are single-family residential uses. To the south is the Serra Center and other retail uses.



View of subject site looking north from W. Calaveras Blvd.

THE APPLICATION

The application is submitted pursuant to Title XI, Chapter 30, Section 3.02 (Maximum Permissible Sign Area), Section 3.04 (Uniform Design and Materials – Sign Program) and Section 42.10 (Site and Architectural Review) of the Zoning Ordinance.

Project Description

The applicant proposes a sign program for the former single tenant bank building (275 W. Calaveras Blvd.), which recently received approvals for tenant improvements for three new restaurants (Lee's Sandwich's, Hai Noodle and Indo Taste). The applicant proposes internally illuminated, individual channel letters, 1'8" tall to be adhered to the building fascia on the north, south and west elevations.

Conformance with the General Plan

The proposed project complies with the City's General Plan in terms of Guiding Principle 3.b-G-1 in that the sign serves to direct vehicles in the facility which assists in providing for a safe, convenient and efficient vehicular movement within the General Commercial area.

Conformance with the Zoning Ordinance

The proposed sign program is consistent with the General Commercial (C2) Zoning District. The purpose and intent of the C2 District is to provide for a wide range of retail sales and personal and business services primarily oriented to the automobile customer to provide for general commercial needs of the City and to promote stable, attractive commercial development which will afford a pleasant shopping environment. In this case, the new signs will help direct customers to the restaurant locations from W. Calaveras Blvd. and in the Calaveras Plaza shopping center.

Conformance with the Sign Ordinance

As per Section 3.02, the maximum permissible total sign area is calculated either by 1 square foot for each 2 lineal feet of building perimeter or 2 square feet for each 1 lineal foot of public street frontage. At the applicant's discretion, the calculation that yielded the greater sign area was used. Based on the parcel's public street frontage of 329 square feet, a total of 658 square feet of sign area is permitted for this site. Each tenant space shall multiply their total floor area by 0.0957 to obtain their own maximum sign area.

As per Section 3.04 of the Sign Ordinance, multi-tenant use structures shall seek uniformity of design and materials. The applicant proposes to use internally illuminated, individual channel letters, 1'8" tall adhered to the building fascia. *Staff recommends* a condition of approval that prior to any new signage on the existing monument sign, elevations are submitted and reviewed by staff to ensure consistency with the building signage. Any signage placed on the monument sign shall be deducted from the total 658 square feet of allowable sign area for the subject site.

Conformance with S-Zone Combining District

The purpose of the "S" Zone Combining District is to "ensure the layout of the site and design of the proposed buildings, structures and landscaping are compatible and aesthetically harmonious with adjacent and surrounding development". In this case, the sign program is compatible with the site and surrounding commercial areas. The majority of the shopping centers in the area, especially Calaveras Plaza shopping center, have older cabinet-type building and monument signs. The individual channel letter signage proposed is an improvement in terms of visual appearance and quality over the existing outdated signage.

Conformance with the Midtown Specific Plan

The proposed project is within the Midtown Specific Plan Area and is therefore subject to the Midtown Design Standards and Guidelines. The design guidelines contain criteria such as no cabinets or animated, moving or flashing signage, freestanding signs only as site entries, no exposed conduit, and only signs that are professionally fabricated. The proposed sign program does not conflict with any of the applicable Midtown Design Guidelines for signage.

Neighborhood/Community Impact

Staff concludes that the project, as conditioned, will meet the requirements as set forth within the City of Milpitas regulations and will not create a negative community impact. The sign program is compatible with the site and surrounding commercial development. The new directional signage will assist in directing vehicles to the site from W. Calaveras and from the Calaveras Plaza shopping center. Therefore, the project will not be detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity nor to the public health, safety and general welfare.

Conformance with CEQA

The proposed project is categorically exempt from further environmental review pursuant to Class 11, Section 15311 (“Accessory Structures – On-premises Signs”) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION

Close the Public Hearing. Approve “S” Zone Approval Amendment No. SA2004-18 based on the Findings and Special Conditions of Approval listed below.

FINDINGS

1. The proposed project complies with the City’s General Plan in terms of Guiding Principle 3.b-G-1 in that the sign serves to direct vehicles in the facility which assists in providing for a safe, convenient and efficient vehicular movement within the General Commercial area.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the purpose and intent of the “C2” Zoning District in that the new signs will help direct customers to the restaurant locations from W. Calaveras Blvd. and in the Calaveras Plaza shopping center.
3. The proposed project is consistent with the purpose of the “S” Zone Combining District in that the sign program is compatible with the site and surrounding commercial areas and is an improvement in terms of visual appearance and quality over the existing outdated signage.
4. The proposed sign program does not conflict with any of the applicable Midtown Design Guidelines for signage and is consistent with the sign criteria such as no cabinets or animated, moving or flashing signage, freestanding signs only as site entries, no exposed conduit, and only signs that are professionally fabricated.
5. The proposed project will not create any adverse community impacts and will not be detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity nor to the public health, safety and general welfare.
6. The proposed project is categorically exempt from further environmental review pursuant to Class 11, Section 15311 (Accessory Structures – On-premise signs) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

1. This “S” Zone Amendment No. SA2004-18 approval is for a sign program for the multi-tenant building located at 473-479 W. Calaveras Blvd. (APN 22-25-042) with a total sign area of 658 square feet (sign multiplier = 0.0957), as depicted on approved plans dated March 24, 2004. Any modification to this sign program requires an “S” Zone amendment, which shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission. (P)
2. The building signage for this multi-tenant commercial structure shall consist of internally-illuminated, individual channel letters, a maximum of 1’8” tall, adhered to the building fascia just below the eaves on the north, south and west elevations above the tenant’s individual space. No building signage shall be permitted on the east elevation or above another tenant’s space. (P)
3. Prior to the approval of any new signage for the existing freestanding sign located on the east side of the parcel, plans consistent with the sign program shall be submitted and reviewed by the Planning Staff. All signage placed on the monument sign shall be deducted from the total 658 square feet of allowable sign area for the subject site. (P)
4. If at the time of application for building permit there is a project job account balance due to the City for recovery of review fees, review of permits will not be initiated until the balance is paid in full. (P)
5. This use shall be conducted in compliance with all appropriate local, state and federal laws and regulations. (P)

